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**TO: Economic Support Supervisors  
Economic Support Lead Workers  
Training Staff  
Child Care Coordinators  
W-2 Agencies**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens  
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**BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO**

**No.: 03-81**

**Date: 12/29/2003**

**Non W-2 ☐ W-2 ☒ CC ☐**

**PRIORITY: HIGH**

**SUBJECT: WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2) AND LIMITED SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY  
INCOME (SSI) ENDING FOR CERTAIN NON-CITIZENS**

**CROSS REFERENCE:** W-2 Manual, Operations Memo 03-72

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

This memo is being issued to inform Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies of the ending of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for certain disabled non-Citizens who may now be eligible for the W-2 program.

**BACKGROUND**

On August 22, 1996, several laws changed regarding the way Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits were issued to certain non-citizens. Aged, blind, and disabled refugees or asylees lawfully admitted into this country after August 22, 1996 were considered for time limited SSI benefits. The seven-year SSI benefit time limit for these groups has started to expire.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will issue each affected alien a letter indicating the date of federal SSI benefit termination. If state SSI payments are also received, the state will issue a separate letter to the affected alien of the date of state SSI payment loss.

**POLICY**

Qualified aliens who have lost SSI eligibility may be eligible for W-2. W-2 agencies should complete the W-2 eligibility determination process and placement evaluations in the same manner as for any other W-2 applicant.

## ***PROCEDURES***

If the individual who lost SSI benefits is determined eligible for W-2, the Employability Plan developed for that individual should include activities appropriate to the applicant's ability and needs. Education and skill testing, disability vocational evaluation, English As a Second Language (ESL), Citizenship training, Citizenship application referral to agencies listed in Appendix IX in the W-2 manual or agencies providing services to aged refugees, and culturally competent health service referral are examples of appropriate activities.

The Financial Employment Planner should inform the W-2 applicant that s/he may be able to obtain SSI benefits through an appeal of the termination or reapplication under the following circumstances if s/he:

- Has obtained US citizenship,
- Has obtained 40 qualifying SSI work quarters. The SSA may count work quarters earned by a spouse or parent towards the applicant's 40 SSI work quarters,
- Is an alien who was honorably discharged from the US Military, or
- Is the alien spouse/widow(er) of an alien now serving or who was honorably discharged from the US Military.

If the alien has already received citizenship, has 40 total work quarters as noted above, or has military service related SSI eligibility but has not provided proof to the SSA, contact the local SSA for guidance.

The W-2 agency and/or the individual may contact the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) National Customer Line at 1 (800) 375-5283 for application status if the alien has already applied but not yet received Citizenship. If needed, contact agencies listed in the W-2 Manual, Appendix IX to obtain SSI appeal and/or Citizenship application assistance for the alien applicant.

## ***BASIC NATURALIZATION INFORMATION***

Refugees and asylees seeking to become citizens must first convert their alien status to permanent resident alien and obtain INS form I-551. Except for certain military and marital exceptions, they must reside in the United State for 5 years to file an application for naturalization with the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). They must demonstrate good moral character and attachment to US principles, pass a test of basic US history plus demonstrate an ability to read and write simple words and phrases in English. Some longtime residents and persons with certain disabilities can obtain waivers/exemptions from the English language and Civic test requirements. Application and fingerprint fees apply, but low income and disabled applicants can request some fee waivers. USCIS Citizenship

processing delays may add one or more years to the naturalization process. The DWD Bureau of Migrant, Refugee and Labor Services at (608) 266-0578 or (608) 266-8759 may be able to help provide further general information on refugee related questions.

## **CONTACTS**

BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

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Note: Email contacts are preferred. Thank you.